

CLAIM AMENDMENTS

1.(Previously Presented) A method of thawing meat frozen in meat blocks, comprising providing an apparatus for initial separation of the meat block before the meat block is placed in a rotating container, applying pressure to the meat block (1) before the meat block is treated in the rotating container (7), for initiating a separation process of the meat block (1) into individual pieces (2).

2.(Previously Presented) The method according to claim 1, wherein the pressure is applied over diagonals of the meat block (1).

3.(Previously Presented) The method according to claim 1 further comprising removing a package from the meat block before the meat block (1) is placed in the rotating container (7).

4.(Withdrawn-Currently Amended) An apparatus for performing a the method of thawing meat frozen in meat blocks, the apparatus performing an initial separation of the meat block before the meat block is placed in a rotating container, the apparatus comprising a number of pistons (3, 4, 5, 6) which either cooperate in pairs or cooperate with a firm opposite face for applying pressure to the meat block (1).

5.(Withdrawn-Previously Presented) The apparatus according to claim 4 wherein the pistons (3, 4, 5, 6) have planar faces facing toward the meat block (1).

6.(Withdrawn-Previously Presented) The apparatus according to claim 4 wherein the pistons (3, 4, 5, 6) have faces having elevations or depressions facing toward the meat block (1).

7.(Withdrawn-Previously Presented) The apparatus according to claim 4 wherein the pistons (3, 4, 5, 6) have an outwardly inclined elevation in at least one corner facing toward the meat block (1).

8.(Withdrawn-Previously Presented) The apparatus according to claim 4 wherein the pistons (3, 4, 5, 6) have depressions to receive corners of the meat block (1) facing toward the meat block (1).

9.(Withdrawn-Previously Presented) The apparatus according to claim 4 wherein the pistons (3, 4, 5, 6) are positioned for applying the pressure to the meat block (1) over a diagonal or diagonals of the meat block (1).

10.(Withdrawn-Previously Presented) The apparatus according to claim 4 further comprising means for detecting and/or removing pieces of metal.

11.(New) The method according to claim 1 wherein the apparatus comprises a number of pistons (3, 4, 5, 6) which either cooperate in pairs or cooperate with a firm opposite face for applying pressure to the meat block (1).

12.(New) The method according to claim 11 further comprising providing the pistons (3, 4, 5, 6) with planar faces which face towards the meat block (1).

13.(New) The method according to claim 11 further comprising providing the pistons (3, 4, 5, 6) with faces having elevations or depressions facing toward the meat block (1).

14.(New) The method according to claim 11 further comprising providing the pistons (3, 4, 5, 6) with an outwardly inclined elevation in at least one corner facing toward the meat block (1).

15.(New) The method according to claim 11 further comprising providing the pistons (3, 4, 5, 6) with depressions facing towards the meat block (1) for receiving corners of the meat block (1) therein.

16.(New) The method according to claim 11 further comprising positioning the pistons (3, 4, 5, 6) for applying the pressure to the meat block (1) over a diagonal or diagonals of the meat block (1).

17.(New) The method according to claim 11 further comprising providing means for detecting metal, and, using the detecting means on the meat block or the individual pieces to detect whether any metal is contained therein.